

VIDEO GAMES EXPRESS

Volume 1, Number 5 March, 1984

The purpose of our reviews is to aid you in your buying decisions. We don't claim to be all-seeing and all-knowing as far as how well each game will do, but we WILL give you an honest opinion.

Our game reviewer is Mike Klug, age 18. He has been playing video games for over 4 years, and is an excellent all-around player. He currently co-holds the world record on Pole Position. Each game is also reviewed by an operator to get an opinion from that perspective.

A message to the manufacturers reading our reviews: If you have a good game we will say so (and we sincerely believe that you try your best to create good games). But, if we don't feel a game is good, we also say so. We owe that to our readers. We hope that you will continue to support us in our efforts. Look at it this way: Unless an operator makes a profit on a game, he doesn't have money to buy additional games (quite possibly one of yours). This effect snowballs so several sales can be affected over a period of time. We feel that an honest review, even if rated low, is good for everyone, ESPECIALLY YOU.



BORF, evil alien intent on capturing the Planet Earth, stars in "Space Ace."

NEW GAME REVIEWS by Mike Klug

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SPACE ACE (Cinematronics)

OVERVIEW - Come fly with superhero Ace and his girlfriend Kimberley through the skies of the universe as they fight evil villian Borf and try to regain control of the Planet Earth. Ace is suddenly attacked by evil Borf, who changes him into puny Dexter with the dread Infanto Ray, and kidnaps his girlfriend Kimberley. Borf's plan is to take over the Earth by changing everyone into babies. Dexter or Ace's mission, should you decide to accept it, is to struggle to regain Ace's manhood, save Kimberley, destroy the Infanto Ray and save Earth. Available initially as a kit for Dragon's Lair (with or without a new improved laser-disc player exchange). A

dedicated game will be issued later. The kit is being issued first to give preference to those who bought Dragon's Lair.

GAME ACTION - The player interacts with the disc, the same as on Dragon's Lair, but with many more player decisions and 8 ways to move instead of 4.

ORIGINALITY - The same type of game as Dragon's Lair but with a different story. The story is original. (6)

GRAPHICS - The animation is first-class, done by Don Bluth's Magicom (formerly Starcom). This graphics company produces the best animation in laser disc games by far. (9)

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SPACE ACE continued

CONTROLS - Has an 8-way joystick and a fire/energize button (one on each side) to fight back or to energize Dexter into Ace for various periods of time throughout the game. Player can choose one of 3 difficulty levels Cadet, Captain, or Space Ace, by pressing one of 3 buttons.

SOUND - Much improved over Dragon's Lair, now with character voices throughout the game, not just grunts and sound effects. (9)

OPINION - Players are now familiar with inter-active laser disc games, having played Dragon's Lair and other similar games. The animators went all out to improve on the Dragon's Lair concept and have succeeded. We are not downgrading Dragon's Lair, which for the first laser disc game, was exceptionally good for the first venture in the new technology. A poor quality first laser game could have had damaging repercussions for future games. Space Ace provides many more different types of activity on the screen, game play is more complex and there's more detail. Should make for an interesting and challenging game.

OVERALL RATING (8)

EARNINGS POTENTIAL (9) conversion
(8) dedicated



DEXTER promised to help save kidnapped Kimberley in this scene from "Space Ace."

ROOTBEER TAPPER (Bally/Midway)

OVERVIEW - Bally has released a game for the arcade and other non-adult locations. The game is the same as "Tapper" but substitutes root beer for beer. You are a soda-jerk, pouring root beer for your customers in 4 different scenes plus the bonus scene. Available in upright and cocktail versions.

GAME ACTION - Player pours and slides mugs of root beer to a thirsty crew of customers. It's a mad rush as they slide empties for you to catch before they slide off the counter and pound on the counter for another round. After they have their fill, they leave. Get the tip and the dance hall girls come out for their number. Then it's back to the tap until they've had their fill. A bonus rack features a root beer bandit who shakes up 5 of the six cans on the counter, then moves them around ala a shell game. Then it's up to you to pick the unshaken can for a bonus. Pick the wrong one and you're in for a foamy surprise. Screens include indoor, outdoor, and a space scene.

ORIGINALITY - Original idea and original game play. (9)

GRAPHICS - The graphics are quite good, and there's a lot of detail. (8)

CONTROLS - Has two joysticks. Left joystick (4-way) moves the soda jerk to different counters or back and forth along a counter. The right joystick is a 2-way with a spring return, and is pulled toward the player to fill mugs. When released, the mug is automatically served to the customer.

SOUND - Good sound but nothing outstanding. (5)

OPINION - It is fun to play, but it could get frustrating to players because the difficulty seems to increase significantly on the 3rd level (it seems almost impossible to get past that level.) The bonus rack is a novel and fun idea.

OVERALL RATING - (7)

EARNINGS POTENTIAL - (6)

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GOAL TO GO (Stern)

OVERVIEW - An interactive laser-disc football game. The game player guides the football player through each play (as in Dragon's Lair). This is a one or two player game but both players play against the computer, not against each other. The football players are semi-professional and the plays

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were staged on a practice field. It should have been in a stadium. Because of space limitations on the disc, the game takes license with the position you are at on the field vs. the place you are at in the particular game. This is an all-offense game so you should "go for it" even on the 4th down. Available as an upright.

GAME ACTION - The game begins with the kickoff. As soon as the player catches the ball, the player begins to control the player and must make the proper moves with the joystick or buttons. After each play, a statistics screen appears, which gives the down number, yards to go, position on the field, and a ball clock. The player is given a choice of 6 plays (always the same) and the choice must be made in the allotted time or you lose a down and get a 5-yd. penalty. Some plays can go all the way for a touchdown, others won't go anywhere, just like in the real game. Play ends when you fail to make a first down (or after 8 minutes at the option of the game operator). The computer monitors your play selections. If you try the same type of play too many times in a row, or just too often, you won't get very far. So you must be a good coach and call a good game as well as being able to guide the player.

GAME ADJUSTMENTS - This game has a wealth of options to tailor the game as you desire. There are 16 levels of difficulty (changes the length of the window that moves can be made in). You can display the score during the football action (recommend - off), display diagram (x's & o's) before each play (your option), allow game continuation (recommend - on) with either one or two coins (your option). The following options are recommended when the game is first installed in a new location to help the beginning player: "Action/Stick Hints" tells the player what control to use and is displayed at the bottom of the screen. "Should Have Hint" tells the player what he did wrong so the player doesn't get frustrated. These options can be deleted after a period of time, if desired, but we suggest that you leave them on if you limit the game to 8 minutes, and off if you allow a game to continue until a missed first down. (Our thanks to Stern Electronics for providing the necessary information for this section - all recommendations are ours - not Stern's).

ORIGINALITY - The first INTER-ACTIVE football game (?).

GRAPHICS - The football players don't look like football players and don't seem like they are trying to win. They know what's coming. It is sometimes difficult to see what to do because of camera positions, especially when the ball is on the side. Computer graphics are very plain, but they give the necessary information. Laser graphics (6), Computer graphics (4).

CONTROLS - Control of the ball-carrier's actions is by a 4-way joystick and 2 sets of hand and feet buttons. Joystick starts movement or changes the direction of the ball carrier. "Hand" buttons are for passes, receptions, hand-offs, and pitchouts. The "Foot" buttons are used only for the extra point kick, and could have been easily combined with the "hands" buttons as they are used at different times (we suspect that 2 separate buttons were used because of one

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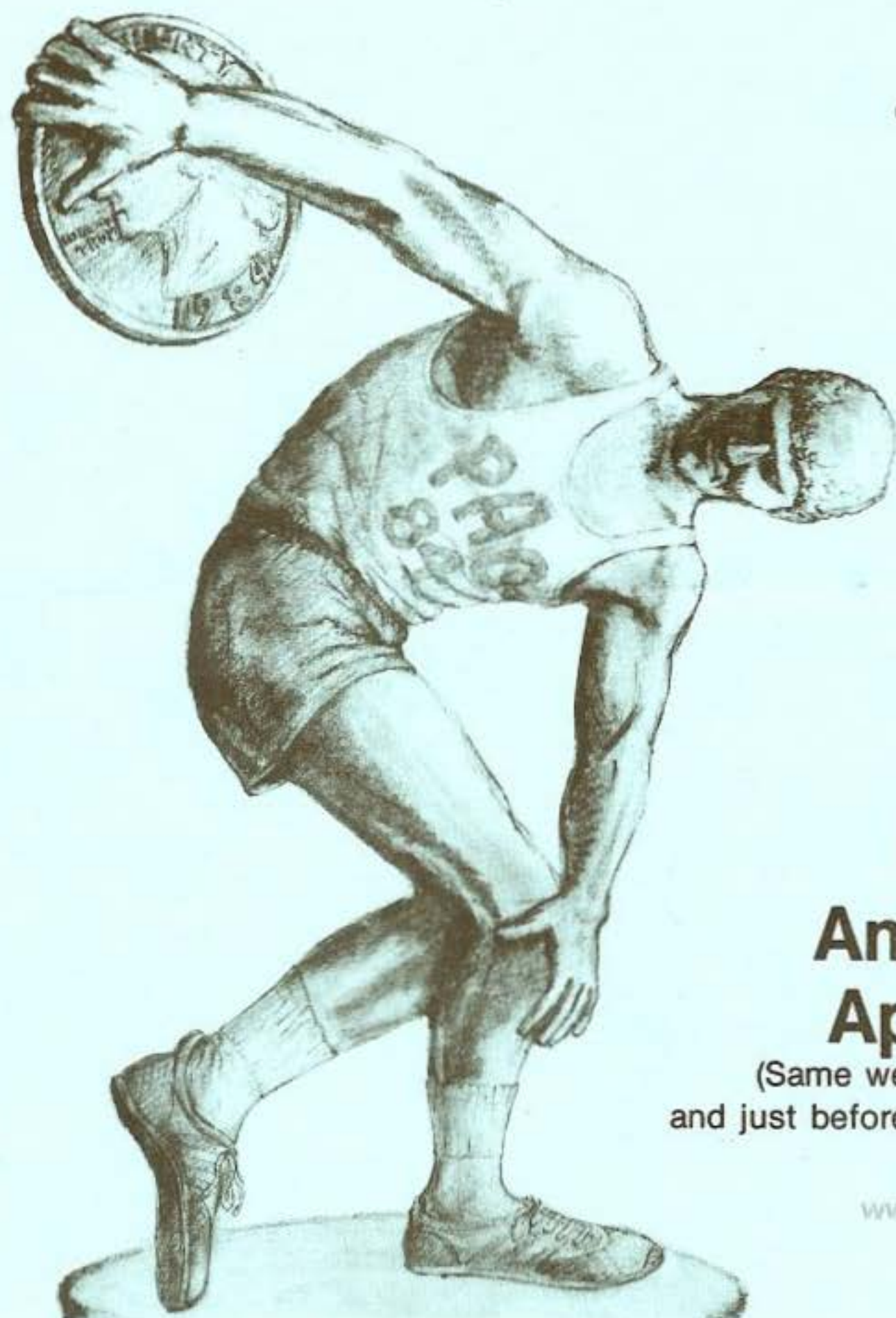
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conversion possibility).

SOUND - Standard football sounds, but no crowd sounds. Computer generated sounds are minimal. (5)

OPINION - The game is fun to play because you can interact with it. But it gets monotonous because the same plays are seen over and over (that's one of the drawbacks in applying laser disc technology to live-action sports.) Better than NFL football because there is more for the player to do and the time given to make your choice of play is more than adequate.

CONVERSION OPTIONS - Will convert "Cliff Hanger" and eventually "Dragon's Lair."

OVERALL RATING - (6)

EARNINGS POTENTIAL - (4) dedicated
(6) conversion

Note: Stern has told us that the disc has 2 sides with different plays on each side. Operators should change sides every 2 weeks or so, to keep players from memorizing the plays. But be careful with the disc. It is a wonder why Stern did not include this information in the manual.

STAR RIDER (Williams)

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OVERVIEW - A laser disc game, Star Rider was born to go as far and as fast as possible. To race the stars, to discover strange and far-away planets that only vivid imagination and the laser disc could create. To race over roads that suddenly pitch straight up and then lead to horizons that haunt and tempt. Through the fantasy worlds of "Cubitalia," "Hexagonia," "Crystallia," and others of surrealistic splendor and daring dimensions, each one setting a more challenging course than the last one and each with it's own special surprises. Available as a standard upright with a removable front wheel, cowling, and motorcycle-style seat.

GAME ACTION - Player jets through a galaxy of sound and light, shape and space, on his futuristic motorcycle. Force field beams keep the Star Rider on-track as he races against his opponents. The shoulder of the road slows the motorcycle down and a total of 3 collisions, either with competitors or obstacles means the end of the race. Each race starts and ends in the "Cosmodrome," an outer-space stadium, where the "Robofficial" announces the player's status and race results. Player MUST slow down on the turns to avoid crashing. Has a continuation feature.

ORIGINALITY - The premise of the game is new, and the split screen is unique. The disc action is on the top 2/3 of the screen. The bottom section is divided into 3 parts: the game scoring statistics, a rear view mirror (laser disc), and speed/location statistics. (8)

GRAPHICS - A lot of effort on laser disc graphics. (8)

SOUND - Has a 3-channel sound system with stereo effects as well as front-rear channel separation. (7)

CONTROLS - Has fully operational handlebars, a new motorcycle-type throttle with constantly variable speed control, turbo button, and 2-level brake.

OPINION - There isn't much to do, just steer through the course, and learn the course well enough to avoid crash-

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ABBREVIATIONS IN GAME LIST

CC - CONVERTED COCKTAIL
CM - CONVERTED MINI-UPRIGHT
CS - CONVERTED SIT-IN
CT - COCKTAIL
CU - CONVERTED UPRIGHT
KR - KIDDIE RIDE
KT - KIT
MU - MINI-UPRIGHT
NO - NOVELTY
PB - PINBALL
SI - SIT-IN
UR - UPRIGHT

N - NEW (NEVER USED)

E - EXCELLENT

G - GOOD

F - FAIR

P - POOR

X - NOT WORKING (game may
otherwise be in good
condition).

Note: Number in parentheses
indicates more than one is
for sale at that price.
Price listed is for EACH.

ing. I don't think that the game will appeal to a large number of players.

OVERALL RATING - (7)

EARNINGS POTENTIAL - (5)

MARVIN'S MAZE (SNK Electronics)

OVERVIEW - Once upon a time, Marvin lived in his Maze and everything was wonderful until the Robonoids came... This game consists of 2 mazes, one on top of the other, joined by shafts on 4 corners. Has movable bridges to move from one part of maze to another, and once the bridge is moved by Marvin, the Robonoids cannot follow. Available as a conversion and a dedicated upright.

GAME ACTION - The object of the game is to travel throughout the top and bottom mazes, running over and eliminating jewels (ala Crystal Castles) and energizers. Running over an energizer gives Marvin one shot to use against the Robonoids and it may be used whenever necessary. Once all the jewels and energizers are eliminated, you advance to the next maze. The Marvin may move back and forth between levels by going to a corner where there is a shaft.

ORIGINALITY - This game has borrowed ideas from several other games, including Crystal Castles and Pac-Man. The 2 levels of mazes is new. (5)

GRAPHICS - Simple but good quality. The mazes on the different levels are almost the same. (5)

SOUND - Has a cute melody with several unique sounds, but nothing special. (6)

CONTROLS - There is supposed to be a 4-way joystick on the game but the one we played had an 8-way stick, making play difficult. (Joystick is supplied by SNK). Has a fire button on each side and one on the top of the joystick.

OPINION - Another maze game using a lot of old ideas. There isn't enough variation in the mazes so players will probably tire of it quickly.

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OVERALL RATING - (5)

EARNINGS POTENTIAL - (6) conversion
(3) dedicated

GAME REVIEWS

by Troy Kindred

Beginning with this issue, we have a new game reviewer, Troy Kindred, age 20. He holds the world record on "Mappy" and works in an arcade. We welcome Troy to "Video Games Express" and we hope you enjoy his reviews.

His reviews for this issue begin on page 7.

REACH THE CALIFORNIA MARKET - ADVERTISE IN "VIDEO GAMES EXPRESS"

OVERVIEW - You're Boomer, a prehistoric Warrior living in a dangerous land in a time when dinosaurs ruled the world. Armed with your deadly boomerang, your goal is to explore the land in quest of treasures. But beware of gigantic, vicious monsters, sea serpents and enemy tribesmen who attack on foot or hurl fireballs while riding dinosaurs. The ultimate challenge is to knock the enemy warrior off his dinosaur and take his place atop the beast. This will give you maximum mobility and firepower.

GAME ACTION - The object of the game is to make your way to each of the treasures located throughout the large scrolling screen (the equivalent of 36 screens). After each treasure is found, a letter is given to you, the letter is part of the name of the game. After each treasure is found, a map is shown so you can decide where to go next. Throw boomerangs at the enemies. If you move or change direction after the boomerang is thrown, it will always come back to you. Mount riderless dinosaurs. Once you are on the dinosaur, you have increased power to destroy the enemies by using fireballs instead of the limited range boomerangs. You can be dismounted from your dinosaur by the enemies, then its back on your feet with your boomerang. Once you retrieve all the treasures on the first level (and it isn't easy) you are victorious and move to a challenging new world full of new adventures and dangers. A bonus timer counts down as you play, and if you lose a man before getting a treasure, you lose all bonus points for having hit enemies that were not already credited by reaching a treasure.

ORIGINALITY - The boomerang, constantly scrolling screen, are all original. Not a copy of another game. (8)

GRAPHICS - A lot of time and effort went into making a very detailed and colorful game. The obstacles and enemies are well detailed and different throughout the field. (9)

SOUND - The sound is excellent. (7)

CONTROLS - Has an 8-way joystick, a "throw" and "ride" button. They work well.

CONVERSIONS - Can convert all Midway and Data East "Bump'n'Jump" and "Burgertime" games.

OPINION - This is a game that will take a lot of effort to clear the first screen. It is fun to play but the success of the game will depend on whether players will stick with it. We think they will.

OVERALL RATING - (8)

EARNINGS POTENTIAL - (8) conversion
(5) dedicated

TAG-TEAM WRESTLING (Data East)

OVERVIEW - You are in control of a team of 2 wrestlers who are battling 2 other computer wrestlers known as the "Mad Maulers."

GAME ACTION - At the start of the game, the four combatants disrobe as the announcer introduces the teams, to the roar of the crowd. The action starts quickly as the "Mauler" circles around the ring in preparation for the game player's joystick-controlled attack. The first objective is to move the joystick to grab the opponent while his arms are down. Continuous stick movement changes the holds of the wrestlers. When "attack" appears on the screen, the player has 3 seconds to push a button to select one of 12 separate moves, such as "Drop Kick," "Jab," "Rear Drop," "Pile Driver," "Cobra Twist," "Karate Chop," etc. When a combatant is thrown down, the player can use a second button to attempt to pin the man while the fast-moving referee counts "1, 2..." A power indicator at the top of the screen tells the players his wrestler's strength level which can be restored to high power by tagging a teammate. Realism is excellent. Even when a wrestler is thrown from the ring a spectator sometimes runs from the stands to join the fray. When a wrestler is knocked out of the ring, he has 20 seconds to get back in.

ORIGINALITY - Another sports-oriented game, but the first "wrestling" game. (7)

GRAPHICS - The players have reasonably good graphics, but the crowd scenes are extremely poor. Considering that there are only 2 screens, and that the game is not a cassette game, a better job was possible. (4)

SOUND - Limited sound. Grunts and other sounds were rather raspy and very poor quality. The umpires countdown is cute. (3)

CONTROLS - Has a 4-way joystick and two buttons as described above. Rotating the joystick rapidly helps to break the two wrestlers apart.

OPINION - When I started to play this game, I didn't know what to do, and that can be very frustrating to a player. The only way I learned how to play was by being given instructions from a Data East employee. (Ed. note- Mike tested this same game and never could figure it out - he didn't have the help that Troy had). The game is fun to play ONCE YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO, but it will have limited appeal because most players will give up. Only wrestlers and those who follow the

continued on page 8

TAG TEAM WRESTLING continued

sport will know what the names of the holds and what they do.

OVERALL RATING - (7)

EARNINGS POTENTIAL (2) dedicated game. Should have been available as a conversion.

MR. DO'S WILD RIDE (Universal)

OVERVIEW - It's time to test your skills on the rails of "Mr. Do's Wild Ride." Once again, Mr. Do is out to get to the goal while dodging perilous runaway roller coasters and a variety of obstacles on the track. Ladders are placed strategically along the rails to save Mr. Do and speed him along toward the goal - but even the ladders can be dangerous when the coasters speed by! Removing the fruit from the ladders changes the targets at the goal, and removing the E.X.T. R.A. awards another Mr. Do. If you can reach the goal when the lucky diamond appears, you are awarded a replay (not legal in some states). It's an experience you won't soon forget. Available as a conversion only.

GAME ACTION - You are in control of Mr. Do as you maneuver him along the coaster rails, elevators, and up and down the ladders. On each screen, the object is to get to the goal, and along the way get bonus points for the fruit. This is a pattern game, and learning the pattern is the best way to get through, but it isn't easy.

ORIGINALITY - Something completely different (9).

GRAPHICS - A lot of detail, a lot of different obstacles, coasters move realistically, as in an actual coaster ride. 6 screens of varying coaster designs. (8)

SOUND - Very good. (7)

CONTROLS - Has a 4-way joystick and a "Run" button. The "run" button is helpful when you need to get through an area quickly but it makes the bonus timer go down faster.

OPINION - Will probably rise to the top of the charts rather quickly. It is fun to play and will appeal to all age groups. It will be hard to play at first, but will definitely hold a players interest. Once a level is completed, it is easy to complete again while you work on the next level.

OVERALL RATING (9)

EARNINGS POTENTIAL - (9+). A definite hit.

ADS IN "VIDEO GAMES EXPRESS" DO GET RESULTS. AND OUR APRIL ISSUE WILL BE DISTRIBUTED AT THE PACIFIC AMUSEMENT SHOW IN ANAHEIM IN APRIL. PLACE YOUR AD TODAY FOR ADDED CIRCULATION.

OVERVIEW - The development of the Firefox plane has taken the Soviet Union only 3 years instead of the expected 10 years. To protect vital national security interests and to learn what makes it so advanced, the U.S. must acquire the plane before the Soviet Union begins mass production. Eastwood's character, Major Gant, asks how this will be done, and the answer is as simple as it is chilling: "You've got to steal it." Trained, briefed, and equipped with a highly complex, one-way homing device, the player, as Major Gant, finds himself at the controls of this advanced war plane. Although Gant is heard to say, "Let's see what this thing can do," flying the Firefox isn't all fun and games. The Soviets know of the theft, and they dispatch Russian MIG fighter jets and other Firefox prototypes in an effort to hunt down and destroy the stolen one before it can be delivered to the U.S. It's up to the player to avoid the Soviet tracking systems and find his refueling point while avoiding the fighter planes. He is treated to brilliant, changing landscapes of ice fields, mountain ridges, water and thick clouds. Available in upright and cockpit models.

GAME ACTION - Once airborne in the Firefox, there are two objectives: avoid Russian infra-red radar tracking systems, and find the refueling point. The player must also avoid or destroy MIG fighters and other Firefox prototypes. Awareness of fuel level is crucial. The new "heads-up" graphic display functions as a cursor to sight in on targets and displays fuel level and missile ammunition status. The player chooses one of four escape flight paths during "level select." He is then faced with an ongoing series of challenges. Game play is determined solely by the player's responses to a wide variety of risk/reward situations. High altitude flying uses less fuel but makes Firefox more vulnerable to detection. Low altitude flying uses more fuel but gives better cover. A direct hit by enemy aircraft also depletes fuel. Ground shadows, cloud reflections, secret ground targets, helicopters, ships, and instruction clips from the movie add to the extraordinary realism. At higher levels, day turns to night, and the player must rely only on the cursor to fly the ship. For 2 coins, players may select either a 3,000-mile or a 6,000-mile journey. For 3 coins, players may select a 9,000-mile or unlimited journey.

ORIGINALITY - Another shoot-em-up space game with laser graphics, similar to Mach 3. Original sequences include the takeoff. (6)

GRAPHICS - Laser graphics from the movie. Computer graphics were well done. Laser (9), Computer (7).

continued on page 9

SOUND - Laser disc sounds are from the movie. Computer generated sounds are unique. Computer sound (8).

CONTROLS - The flying controls are the same as in "Star Wars." The fire buttons on the controller have 2 purposes: the trigger switches fire bursts of cannon-type shells from the Firefox nose, and the thumb buttons operate the launching of one of the 4 missiles for large target destruction. The game also supplies a headphone jack and a volume control so players can enjoy the full stereo effect.

OPINION - I enjoyed playing the game, but it is frustrating because no playing instructions are provided on the game. The material explaining the game is provided to me after I play the game so that I can review it as a regular player.

OVERALL RATING: (8)

EARNINGS POTENTIAL: (7)

NOVA 2001 (Universal)

OVERVIEW - Citadel in a parallel universe at subspace coordinates 2001. The organic computer ran a perfect society. Life in any form was forbidden. Available as a conversion.

GAME ACTION - Another shoot-em-up space game. The enemies appear and you shoot them before they shoot you, while dodging missiles. The enemy has 64 attack patterns. A round is over when you destroy all the enemy's robots. A bonus timer counts down as you play each round, so speed is important. The 4th, 8th, 16th, & 24th rounds carry special bonus points. If you fail to destroy the "Reda" patrol robots, with reasonable speed, the enemy's leader robot, "M.I." will join the attack. The M.I. is hard to destroy, requiring many shots. The enemies move faster in later rounds.

ORIGINALITY - Not really original or unique. The backgrounds were just there and had nothing to do with the game. It is almost as if the designers tried to simulate a laser disc game with computer graphics. (5)

GRAPHICS - Good but average. (5)

SOUND - The best part of the game. (6)

CONTROLS - 8-way joystick, a "fire" button and a "pause" button. The pause button allows you to move without affecting the direction of your firing line.

OPINION - Not really that fun to play. I was bored.

OVERALL RATING - (4)

EARNINGS POTENTIAL - (2)

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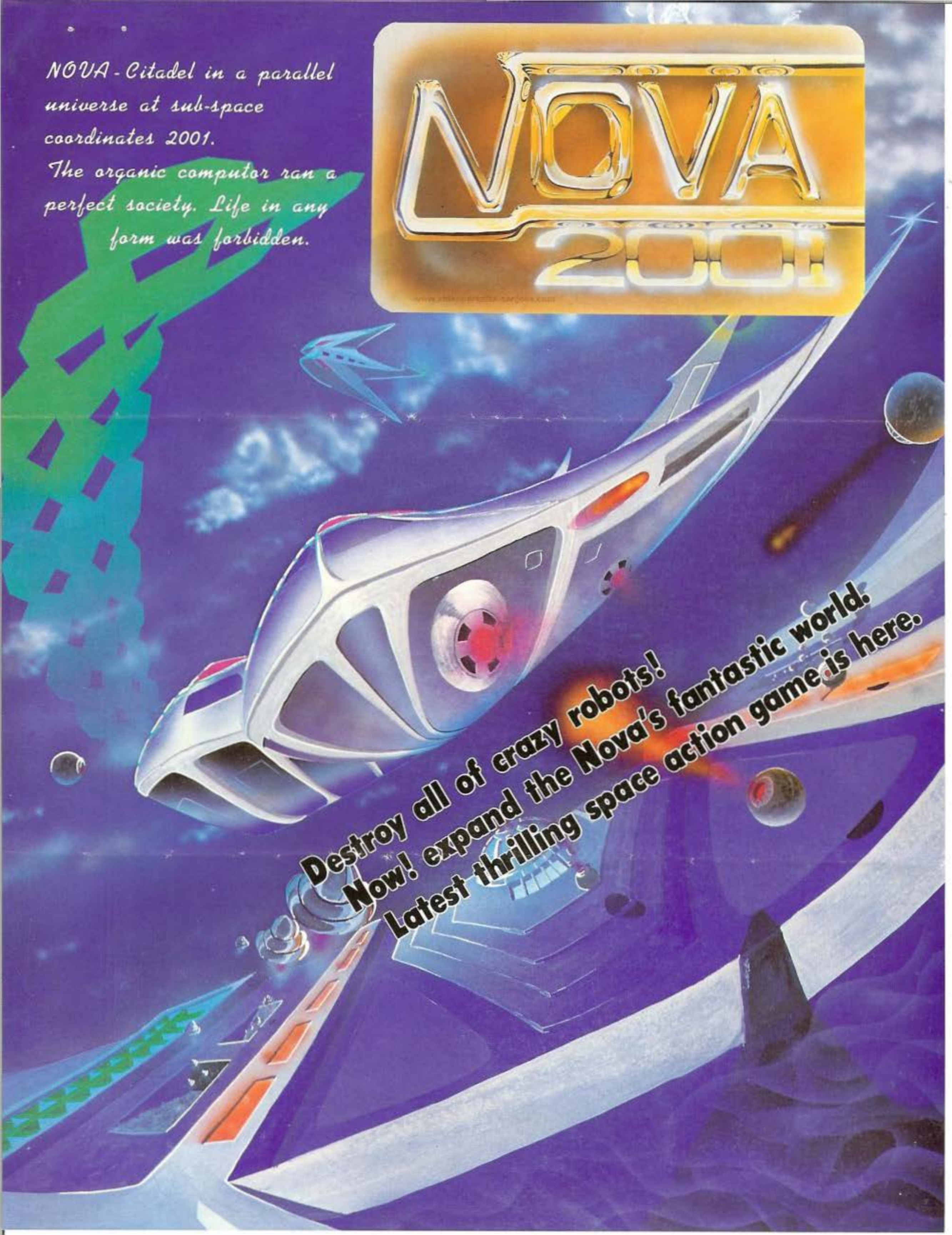
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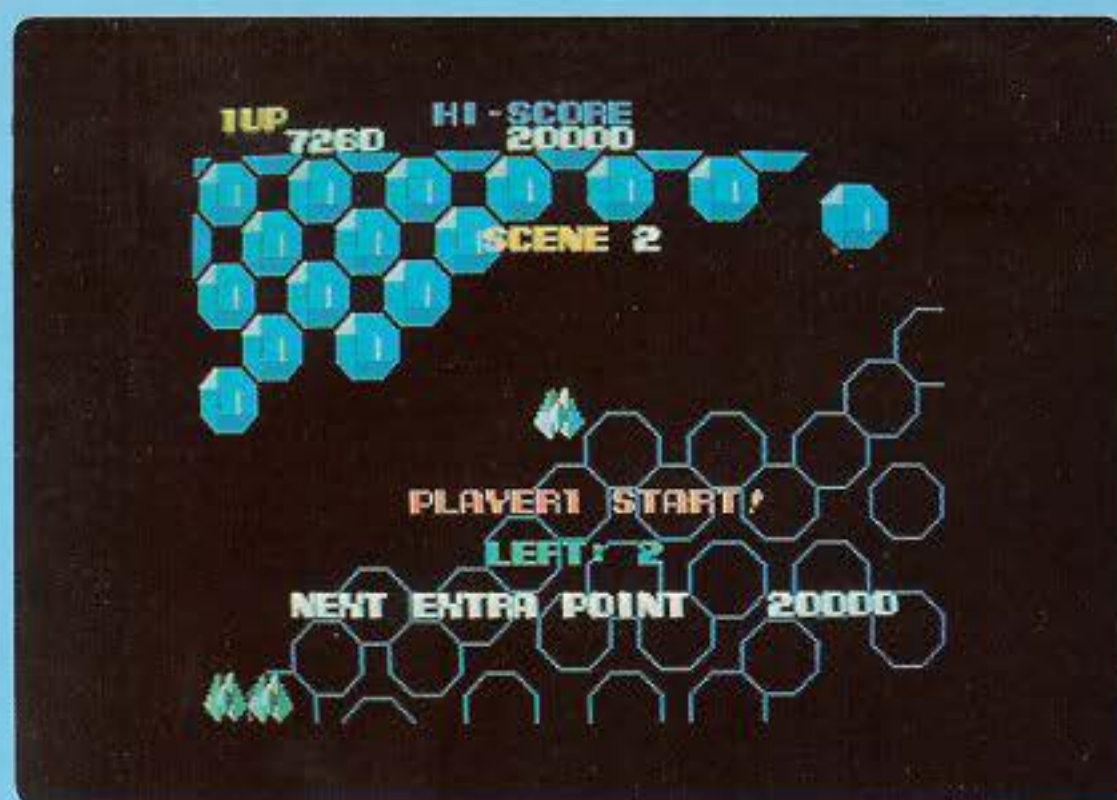
NOVA - Citadel in a parallel universe at sub-space coordinates 2001.

The organic computer ran a perfect society. Life in any form was forbidden.



**Destroy all of crazy robots!
Now! expand the Nova's fantastic world.
Latest thrilling space action game is here.**





ROBOTAN

30pts



YADOCANOIDE

50pts



REDA

100pts

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The enemy has 64 different attack patterns.



A pattern is cleared when you destroy all the enemy's robots.



If you clear the pattern quickly, you will gain extra points on the timer at the bottom of the screen. This timer determines how many bonus chips you receive.



The 4th, 8th, 16th and 24th rounds carry special bonus points.



If you fail to destroy the "Reda" patrol robots, the enemy's leader robot, "M.I.", will join the attack.



"M.I." will continue to attack until hit by ?? missiles.



The patterns in the second half of the game are even more exciting as the enemy begins to move faster.



TACKONG

100pts



BLAIN

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M·I 2000pts

Equipped with an internal, Robot producing, organic computer stronghold.

TECHNICAL POINT

If you push the pause control button, you can move without affecting the direction of your firing line. With practice you too can score a 64 pattern clearing.

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